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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PBTS](#) [NATO](#) [MD](#)
SUBJECT: NEW PRIME MINISTER GRECEANII - A VOTE FOR REFORM

Classified By: Ambassador Michael D. Kirby for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: In an April 8 meeting with the new Prime Minister Zinaida Greceanii, the Ambassador expressed his confidence that her appointment was a vote for reform. The two discussed the new government, President Voronin's progress with Transnistrian leader Smirnov and trafficking in persons issues. End Summary.

A Government of Technocrats

¶2. (C) Ambassador Kirby congratulated Mrs. Greceanii on her appointment as Prime Minister. He said that she had earned the trust of both the European Union and the USG thanks to the extensive cooperation we had with her when she was first-deputy prime minister.

The Ambassador noted our impression that the choices she and President Voronin had made for her new team sent a signal that Moldova is committed to moving ahead on reform. The new Prime Minister, appearing pleased by this vote of confidence and comfortable in her new role, agreed that the coming year would be a busy one.

TN Progress: Contacts with Smirnov

¶3. (C) The Ambassador said he was encouraged that President Voronin had spoken on the phone with Transnistrian leader Smirnov. He noted that David Merkel would be arriving in Chisinau on April 13, and would attend informal talks in Odessa the next evening. He hoped the Prime Minister would be available to meet with Merkel on April 14.

¶4. (C) The Prime Minister said she was pleased when President Voronin had called to tell her about his April 7 phone conversation with Smirnov. April 7 had been an Orthodox Christian holiday known as "Buna Vesti (Good News)," and she expressed the hope that this was the beginning of real good news for Moldova. She posited that solving the Transnistrian problem and integrating the country would bring enhanced economic development and greater security for investors.

¶5. (C) Ambassador Kirby noted that for the past six years, USG representatives have not spoken with Smirnov, although the Russian and Ukrainian ambassadors do maintain contact with him. Our meeting with Smirnov could be useful now and encourage progress within the 5 plus 2 process. The Ambassador wanted the Prime Minister to know that he was considering this step and that Foreign Minister Stratan had promised to discuss the idea with President Voronin. Greceanii encouraged the contact.

Moldova in Danger of Tier III on Trafficking

¶6. (C) Turning to social issues, the Ambassador informed the Prime Minister that Moldova was not making enough progress on fighting trafficking in persons, and was in danger of slipping to Tier III from Tier II watchlist. Placement on Tier III, the lowest tier, would cause problems with our assistance programs and endanger a

possible MCC Compact. Washington, he said, needed to see proof of arrests, prosecution and convictions of police and government officials guilty of involvement in trafficking. The Ambassador said that he would seek a meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Stepaniuc soon to discuss Moldova's efforts in fighting human trafficking. (Note: Stepaniuc is in charge of the government's anti-trafficking group. End note.)

17. (C) Prime Minister Greceanii expressed her determination to fight human trafficking and hoped we could avoid having Moldova put on Tier III. She said that she would appreciate the Embassy's help. She said that the recent change of the Minister of Interior was a positive step. The new minister, Valentin Mejlinschi, she noted, had a better understanding of economic and political issues, and perceptions of the power structures. While largely avoiding direct criticism of the previous minister, she alluded to widespread ethical issues within the Ministry of Interior under him.

Comment:

18. (C) Mrs. Greceanii is a competent professional who has worked well with us on a wide variety of economic and assistance issues, including on the MCC. She is generally regarded as honest and Western oriented. At the same time, she worked successfully with the Russians to resolve the food and wine ban as well as to develop long-term price agreements with Gazprom. The new government has more reform-minded, competent technocrats than did the previous cabinet. As such we view the change of government as a vote for reform and pro-European progress. We will watch Mrs. Greceanii and her team carefully in the run up to the March 2009 elections to try to ensure a free, fair and democratic electoral process. End comment.

KIRBY